

Watkin stand-by for Pringle

LONDON, June 4: Fast-medium bowler Steve Watkin has been drafted into England's squad for the first cricket Test against West Indies as cover for Derek Pringle who has a back injury, reports Reuter.

Team spokesman Peter Smith said on Monday a decision on Pringle's fitness was not likely to be taken until Thursday morning when the Test starts at Headingley, Leeds.

Watkin, who toured Sri Lanka with the England A team last winter, has already claimed 31 first-class wickets for Glamorgan this season at an average of 21.96.

Borg undecided

ROME, June 4: Bjorn Borg is training for his comeback in a Grand Slam tennis tournament but it's unlikely it will be at Wimbledon next month, his trainer said Tuesday, reports AP.

Paolo Bertolucci, a former Italian Davis Cup player who is supervising Borg's workouts at Riano, near Rome, said the 34-year-old Swede has not yet decided which kind of racket to use in his next tournament appearance, wherever that might be.

Using an obsolete wooden racket, the five-time Wimbledon champion lost a first-



BJORN BORG

round match in straight sets to unseeded Spaniard Jordi Arrese in Monte Carlo in April. Borg's appearance in Monaco was his first following a eight-year retirement from professional tennis.

Borg has been testing several modern, mid-size rackets in Riano.

Bertolucci said Wimbledon organizers are willing to give Borg a wild card for the next edition of the most prestigious European tournament "but I am 99 percent sure he will not play there."

Aslam, Rumi take Abahani to final

Sports Reporter

A fine goal by Rumi in extra time ensured Abahani Krita Chakra's passage into Friday's final of the BTC Club Cup charity soccer tournament.

In the first semifinal of the six-team meet at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday afternoon, Abahani beat Calcutta giants East Bengal Club by the odd goal in three after the 90-minute regulation period had ended in a one-all stalemate.

A quickly taken free-kick by Alamgir just outside the East Bengal box found Rumi who made no mistake in putting it into the net past he outstretched hands of goalie Debashish Mukharjee in the 15th minute of extra time.

The goal helped Rumi redeem himself for two earlier misses, once when he failed to score from a rather selfish solo effort down the right flank and again when his powerful volley upon an Aslam pass returned to play after hitting the East Bengal crosspiece in the 74th minute.

It was Abahani's first victory against East Bengal in four outings. Abahani had lost the first encounter way back in 1974 seven nil and two subsequent ties by solitary goal margins. Only once, in the DCM trophy in Delhi in 1984, Abahani were credited with a win against East Bengal when the latter failed to turn up for a quarter-final appointment, thus conceding a walkover to the Dhaka side.

For the first time since the tournament started last Friday it was a rain-free day with the Dhaka Stadium pitch promising conditions for a free-flowing brand of football. Also, the game attracted the largest crowd of the meet to date, in the vicinity of 21 thousand, bringing in the highest gate receipts of Taka 4 lakh 18 thousand and forty. Yet, alas,

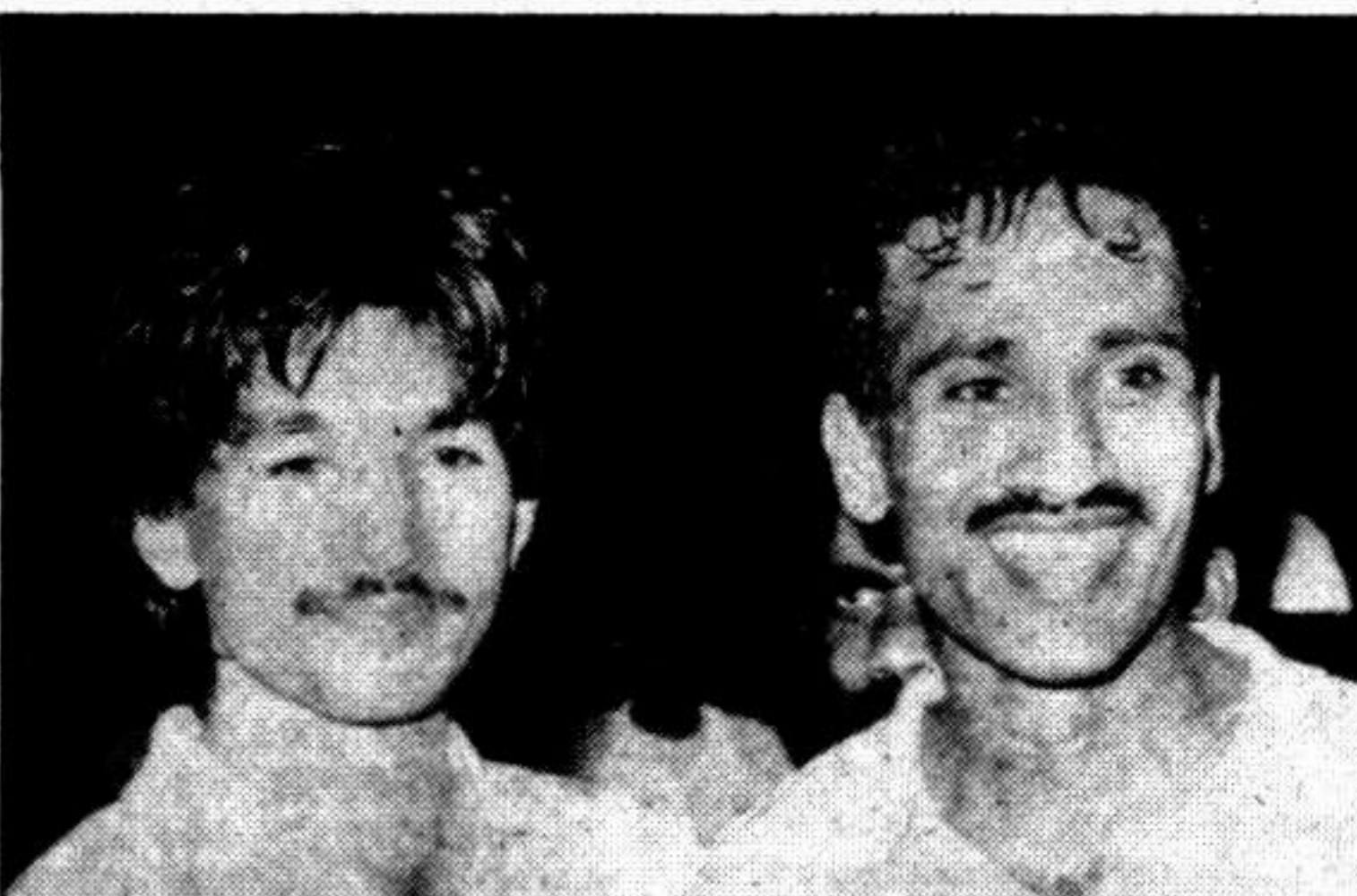


Abahani striker Ghaus is sandwiched between an East Bengal defender and goalie Deabshish Mukharjee in yesterday's first semifinal of the BTC Club Cup football tournament at Dhaka Stadium.

neither side appeared in the mood for any adventure, especially Abahani who looked most tentative and rather inhibited for most of the first half.

East Bengal, too, didn't do much in that session barring that moment, in the 34th minute of play when Abahani right back Ranjit was called upon to make a brilliant goalline save after Prasanta Banerjee had headed well on a Krishanu Dey flag kick. Ranjit's fellow defender Rehan had needlessly given away the corner.

Things livened up in the second session with Abahani discovering their ball skills after a listless performance in



Abahani heroes Rumi (l) and Sheikh Aslam

the first 45 minutes. Left-winger Rumi, just recovered from a bout of jaundice, passed up a golden chance of putting his side ahead when he tried to score all by himself from a difficult angle when he should have passed the ball to an unmarked Aslam deep inside the East Bengal box. However, Rumi did better in the 68th minute when his measured cross from the right found the head of Aslam and the ace striker showed why he is still one of the best in the business in this country by beautifully heading past Debashish (1-0).

But the joy of the Abahani players and supporters was rather shortlived for within a couple of minutes the visitors from Calcutta managed to restore parity. An other unnecessary foul by Rehan just outside the box resulted in referee Nazir Hossain awarding a free kick to East Bengal. Illyas Pasha pushed the ball to Krishanu Dey and as the Abahani wall broke it gave Krishanu, East Bengal's best player on the day, the perfect opening he needed to rifle the ball into the net with goalkeeper Mohsin hardly given a chance to move (1-1).

Abahani should have sealed up the match in the 74th minute but Rumi's pledrider of a volley upon an Alamgir pass from a free kick rebounded off the East Bengal crosspiece with goalie Debashish dumbfounded.

The 30-minute extra time taken to break the deadlock saw both teams going all-out for the decider. Abahani put their home ground advantage to good use by launching some threatening moves into the rival territory with the roaring crowd egging them on.

Fifteen minutes into the extra period Abahani got the goal they had been looking for. A free kick by Alamgir found

Rumi who dribbled past a couple of defenders to slam the ball home to give his side the winner (2-1).

The remaining 15 minutes saw East Bengal trying everything to draw level and the Abahani defence thwarting every move with confidence.

Although the Abahani defence at times appeared to be a little suspect with the young left full back Barun Dewan often being beaten to the ball, yet on the whole the Abahani defenders, marshalled so admirably by the rock-solid Munna Sr., held out well in the face of some dangerous threats. Munna had an excellent match and exuded confidence that inspired his teammates.

Tarun Dey received a yellow card caution from the referee late in the match. East Bengal substituted Krishnendu Roy for Tushar Rakshit and Mastan Ahmed for Mohul Islam but to no effect. Abahani brought on Riaz in the extra period while Swapan relieved a tired Rumi immediately after the latter's matchwinner.

Today, Group B champions Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club will meet Calcutta league champions Mohun Bagan who had finished second behind Abahani in Group A in the second semifinal. The match kicks off at 5:00 pm.

ABAHAANI KC: Mohsin, Ranjit, Rehan, Munna, Barun, Yousuf, Alamgir, Rupa (Riaz), Ghaus, Aslam and Rumi (Swapan).

East Bengal Club: Debashish Mukherjee, Illyas Pasha, Tarun Dey Swarup Das, Aloke Mukherjee, Bikash Panji, Mohul Islam, Prasanta Banerjee, Tushar Rakshit (Krishnendu), Roy Kuljit Singh and Krishanu Dey. Referee: Nazir Hossain.

Samaranch says Barcelona security will be okay

BARCELONA, June 4: The head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Juan Antonio Samaranch, says he has "total confidence" in security at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, despite a bloody terrorist campaign which claimed nine lives near here last week, reports AFP.

The bombing of a civil guard barracks at Vic, some 50 kms (31 miles) north of Barcelona, was the second attack in six months on an Olympic site both attributed to the Basque separatist group, eta.

Samaranch said he was "absolutely certain that the necessary measures will be taken for the Games to be held normally."

He said during a visit here that the IOC would provide "all assistance" to the Spanish authorities — but stressed that security was strictly the responsibility of the host nation's government.

ITF rebuffs Seles

PARIS, June 4: The International Tennis Federation has refused to bend its rules on eligibility for the 1992 Olympics Games, thwarting the hopes of women's number one Monica Seles for a change of heart, reports AFP.

The federation confirmed here on Monday that only players who had competed in either the women's Federation Cup or Men's Davis Cup in the year preceding an Olympics would be eligible to play in the games.

Seles had called for a change in the rules as she doesn't want to play for Yugoslavia in the Federation Cup in Nottingham during July.

The Yugoslav star is piqued at her federation's choice of Sabrina Gole as number two player, and reckons the team hasn't a chance.

Sabatini, Agassi, Sanchez in semis

PARIS, June 4: A game away from defeat, third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini reached the semifinals of the French Open on Tuesday with a gritty 5-7, 7-6, 6-0 victory over Jana Novotna, reports AP.

Aranxta Sanchez Vicario, the 1989 champion, also gained a semifinal berth. The fifth-seeded Spaniard over-

powered No. 4 seed Mary Joe Fernandez, 6-3, 6-2. Andre Agassi became the first man to reach the semifinals. Playing as if he had a plane to catch, he raced to a 6-3, 6-1, 6-1 victory over Switzerland's Jakob Hlasek.

Sabatini trailed 2-5 in the second set, then drew even. In the tie-breaker, she twice saved match points and wasted six set points before prevailing

12-10. That seemed to demoralize Novotna, the sixth seed, who succumbed meekly in the final set after seeming to have an edge in the first two.

"It's good to have this kind of match," Sabatini said. "It makes me ready for the next." Quarterfinals-Gabriela Sabatini (3), Argentina, def Jana Novotna (6), Czechoslovakia, 5-7, 7-6 (12-10), 6-0.

Aces come first

ACES Bridge Club have won the five day selection trial organised by the Bangladesh bridge Federation for selecting a national bridge team to represent the country in the ensuing Zonal championship of the Bridge Federation of Asia and Middle East in Delhi, India. The 3-tyre league schedule concluded at the officers' Club, Dhaka on Monday with four qualified teams participating.

Richardson Windies hero

LEICESTER, England, June 4: Richie Richardson hammered an unbeaten 135 to lead West Indies to a morale-boosting six-wicket win over Leicestershire on Monday, reports Reuter.

The Antiguan, who also scored 63 in the first innings, gave a clear warning of his form to England's bowlers ahead of the first Test which starts on Thursday. He has scored 289 runs in his last three innings.

West Indies, set 276 in 51 overs, romped home with 17 balls to spare after Viv Richards (39 not out) shared in a breathtaking stand of 94 in 14 overs with Richardson. Richards also showed ominously good form with the bat, driving one ball from paceman David Mills out of the ground.



RICHE RICHARDSON

But the day belonged to Richardson after Nigel Briars had declared Leicestershire's second innings at 136 for four in a positive response to Richardson's overnight declaration. Richards on put on 121 in

22 overs with Clayton Lambert, the touring team's replacement opener for the injured Gordon Greenidge. He hit an aggressive 51 from 65 balls. Brian Lara stayed with Richardson while another 45 were added and, although Gus Logie was bowled swinging widely at England paceman Chris Lewis, West Indies were always in sight of their target.

There was nothing Leicestershire's attack could do to subdue Richardson. Even drizzle and pool light did not affect him and he reached his century from 113 balls.

By the end he had faced 142 balls, striking 14 fours and a six.

West Indies picked up 2,000 pounds sterling (3,400 dollars) for their victory. They will collect a 50,000 pounds (85,000 dollars) jackpot if they win their remaining seven games against the counties.

SOCCER SCENARIO

Hassler may join AS Roma

ROME, June 4: West German World Cup midfielder Thomas Hassler is expected to sign for AS Roma this week after joining Juventus for 10 million dollars, reports AFP.

Giovanni Trapattoni, returning as coach after winning the UEFA Cup with Inter Milan, wants Roma goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi in a player-cash exchange. Peruzzi has been inactive for almost the whole season after testing positive for drugs after a league match at Bari. Seven Goran Eriksson, Benfica's Swedish coach, is favourite to take over from Trapattoni at Inter.

Uruguayan international Carlos Aguilera is unhappy about reports Genoa are about to sign Soviet midfielder Igor Dobrowolski to replace him. "My contract runs for another year and I've no intention of leaving before then," he said.

Newly crowned champions Sampdoria hope to sign Red Star Belgrade's Romanian Sweeper Mirograd Belodedic for three million dollars. Argentine striker Claudio Caniggia has taken out his option to stay with Atalanta Bergamo for another year after failing to agree personal terms with Fiorentina.

Napoli signs up Laurent Blanc

NAPLES, Italy, June 4: Napoli have signed French international sweeper Laurent Blanc from First Division Montpellier for a six billion lire (5.5 million dollar) transfer fee, sources at the Italian soccer club said on Monday, reports Reuter.

They said sporting director Giorgio Perinetti signed the agreement on Friday, binding Blanc to play at Napoli for two seasons and giving the club an option on a third at a salary of 600 million lire (545,000 dollars) a year.

There was no official confirmation from Napoli but the sources said announcement of the signing was planned for June 7 when new coach Claudio Ranieri will also be introduced. Ranieri, formerly coach of Cagliari, replaces Alberto Bigon.

English booters keep Toulon title

T OULON, France, June 4: England won the Toulon under 21-football tournament for the second year running here on Monday night, after beating France 1-0 with a late goal from Southampton marksman Alan Shearer, reports AFP.

Shearer's seventh strike here just 13 minutes from the whistle, made him the tournament's top scorer, but the English victory was also assured by some gritty defensive work. France dominated the second half but failed to find a way through.

Final tournament positions. 1. England, 2. France, 3. Scotland, 4. Bengal, 5. USSR, 6. Poland, 7. USA, 8. Mexico.

Warwickshire win again

LONDON, June 4: Seamer Tim Munton grabbed six for 53 to help Warwickshire to a 39-run win over Yorkshire and open a 20-point lead at the top of the English county cricket table on Monday, reports Reuter.

Warwickshire's fourth win in six matches was achieved with 21 balls remaining after rain had cost them nine overs.

Set 308 to win after Warwickshire declared at 170 for three, Yorkshire looked to be in with a chance as Phil Robinson hammered 93 in 121 balls, including a six and 12 fours. But after he was dismissed Yorkshire lost their way.

Prolific Australian batsman

Tom Moody completed his seventh century of the season in all cricket for Worcestershire but rain condemned their match against Glamorgan to a draw.

The weather also robbed Glamorgan opener Hugh Morris of the opportunity of scoring his fourth championships century of the season. The England Test candidate had romped to 74 not out with the help of nine boundaries when play was halted.

Set 268 to win in 74 overs on an unpredictable pitch, Glamorgan slipped to 71 for two before Morris and Matthew Maynard put together a rapid, unbeaten partnership of 83.

Glamorgan were left needing 114 off 28 overs when the rain came.

Steve Marsh again stole the individual honours at Lord's but his efforts were not enough to help force a Kent victory over Middlesex.

Marsh followed his world record-equaling eight catches in Middlesex's first innings with an unbeaten 108 as Kent set Middlesex a target of 343.

But Mike Gatting's side mustered only 164 for six and were grateful for a fighting 76 not out from Keith Brown.

Gatting was one of five victims for Richard Ellison, who had match figures of nine for 116.

Javelin aces eye 100 m

LONDON, June 4: The world's top two javelin throwers are locked in a race to become the first to break the 100 metres barrier after Finland's Seppo Raty smashed the old record by almost five metres on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Raty set a new mark of 96.96 metres at a small athletics meeting in Finland and both he and former holder Steve Backley of Britain said on Monday they were confident the 100-metre mark could be broken.

"A little bit more luck and the javelin may go 100 metres this summer if conditions are perfect," Raty said after smashing his old record of 91.98 set in Japan last month.

Backley, who held the pre-

vious record of 90.98, said he would also now switch to the new Sandvik Champion javelin which has a roughened surface on the tail to improve its aerodynamic qualities.

Raty said he would have thrown even further in Finland if his run-up had been right.

"The same throw would have gone a metre or more further if I had managed to get up some real speed," he said.

Backley was confident the new javelin would extend his distance by at least five metres.

"Raty has already improved by 10 metres since he started using it, and there's no reason why I couldn't do the same. My training throws using it are up on last year."

"His throw has opened up a whole new barrier. Last year we were talking about the 90-metre barrier which I was the

first to break. Now the race is really on for 100 metres," said Backley, who has not competed so far this season.

"I haven't competed yet because I've been holding myself back — but I'm like a caged tiger. I'm getting hungrier to compete and I'll be ready to pounce when the cage is opened."

The two are certain to meet in the World Athletics Championships in August but they could clash in London next month.

"I just can't wait to meet him now, because until we do no one can say who's the best," said Backley.

"It's spurred me on all right. To be world record holder one minute, then to see it kicked six metres into touch the next is a real kick in the teeth."

Johnson's doc found guilty

TORONTO, June 4: The 18-month suspension of the man who prescribed steroids for disqualified Olympic gold medalist Ben Johnson is a warning to "unethical" doctors who illegally distribute the drugs to athletes, a leading Canadian sports official said Monday, reports AP.

Dr Jamie Astaphan shook his head in anger and vowed to appeal after a panel of four doctors from Ontario's College of Physicians and Surgeons de-

livered the penalty — which included a 5,000-dollar fine — for professional misconduct.

Astaphan, 45, admitted prescribing steroids for Johnson and other athletes because he feared they would "kill themselves" if they continued to administer their own treatments, his lawyer, Martin Peters told a hearing.

"Hopefully it'll drive out the unethical doctors and unethical coaches who continue to supply athletes with steroids," said Ken Porter of Athletics Canada in Ottawa, the body governing track and field in the country.

"It's interesting that it's only 18 months," added Porter, who supervises programmes for high-performance athletes. "He can always write for a muscle and fitness magazine."

Astaphan refused comment, but his lawyer said an appeal would be filed through the provincial court system.

Stich — the other German

PARIS, June 4: Ask anyone to name a German tennis player and they will invariably think of Boris Becker or Steffi Graf.

Yet their compatriot Michael Stich is ranked 12th in the world and has, on paper at least, a better chance than Becker of reaching the French Open semifinals this week, reports Reuter.

Stich, the lowest surviving seed in the men's century tournament meets Argentine Franco Davin, ranked 69th in the world, in the last eight on Wednesday.

Normally, the clay courts at

Roland G arros would favour baseliners such as Davin.

But warm weather has baked the clay hard and, coupled with fast balls, made conditions ideal for serve-and-volley players — Stich among them.

Becker, the world number two, has been troubled by a thigh injury here and must get past 1989 champion Michael Chang, a player with renowned tenacity and stamina, today.

Stich has never progressed beyond the third round of a Grand Slam tournament before but, after a 6-3, 6-1, 6-2 thrashing of Frenchman Fabrice Santoro on Monday, he was in confident mood.

"Anybody who reaches the quarter-finals has a chance of winning the tournament," said Stich. "Andres Gomez won it last year and he was by no means a favourite."

Stich, who like Becker, plays Davis Cup tennis for Germany, was undoubtedly helped through the draw by the withdrawals from his quarter of injured third and 13th seeds Ivan Lendl and Jonas Svensson before the event began.

Stich, who has won only one title in his career — a last year's indoor Memphis tournament — has also managed to avoid US Open champion Pete Sampras.

Hearns dethrones Hill

LAS VEGAS, June 4: Thomas Hearns, possibly sitting by taunts that he was done as a fighter, became a world champion for the sixth time Monday night, reports AP.

The "Hit Man" from Detroit won a unanimous 12-round decision over Virgil Hill and took the World Boxing Association light-heavyweight championship outdoors at Caesars



THOMAS HEARNS

Palace. Hearns scoffed at taunts before the fight. "See me Monday night, June 3 and you'll see."

The 32-year-old Hearns mixed boxing ability with power punching and threw in a good dose of heart in upsetting his 27-year-old, previously unbeaten opponent.

Hearns was being treated like the champion, said. "This is not the Thomas Hearns Show."

It was, however. The match was a beautiful exhibition of boxing. Both men feinted with their shoulders, tried to make one another count and they jabbed and jabbed.

Hearns had the power, however, and that made the difference. In the sixth round, Hearns hit Hill with a right to the body and then a right to the head at 2:28 of the round. He hurt him with a body shot and then landed another right and then another right and then a jab-rin g left hook.

Hearns outboxed Hill in the seventh round, then Hill came back with body shots to take the eighth.

Then in the ninth, Hearns, the so-called Hit Man, struck a gain. He landed a jab and hard right to the head, then had Hill reeling with a right, a left and another right. At the end of the fight, Hill said he thought he broke his nose and also hurt a hand.

"I just didn't do the things I should have," Hill said. "The hype of the fight got to me."